



RECIPE

for growing healthy children

Indiana received a USDA 2007 Team Nutrition Training Grant to implement a statewide plan to train child care food service staff on planning and preparing meals and snacks that comply with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and MyPyramid. Twenty workshops were planned throughout the state, making them accessible to Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) participants. The workshops were developed based on a thorough needs assessment and incorporated dialogue learning and food demonstrations. Resource materials and video-based trainings were created for use with the workshops.

The Child Care Culinary Workshops build knowledge and skills in the areas of child nutrition, menu planning, recipes, food preparation and food safety. These workshops motivate and inspire staff to create a total environment that recognizes the role of quality nutrition education and positive adult role modeling for children to build lifelong healthy beliefs and behaviors. Ideas are presented for encouraging children to consume more fruits and vegetables, whole-grain products, fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products, and lean meat and meat alternatives. For further information about the Child Care Culinary Workshop resources, contact the Indiana Department of Education at

317-232-6610 or www.doe.in.gov.



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— Dr. Tony Bennett, State Superintendent of Public Instruction

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Team Nutrition statement

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Child care survey and interview summary

A one-page, two-sided survey was mailed to 375 Indiana Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) sponsors in March 2008. The purpose of the survey was to gather information to assist in planning the Child Care Culinary Workshops. Follow-up interviews were conducted with CACFP sponsors in May/June 2008. The interview questions expanded on the information provided in the surveys. Below is a summary of the responses to the survey and interviews.

Survey summary

How many surveys were returned?

One hundred sixty-eight completed surveys were returned (45 percent response rate).

Who completed the survey?

Most people (58 percent) completing the surveys were center directors or assistant directors. Other respondents included cooks, food coordinators, nutrition/health coordinators, and owners.

What types of CACFP programs completed the survey?

The majority were licensed centers. The next most common type was unlicensed registered day care ministries, followed by Head Start, after school programs, and outside school hours programs.

Do staff eat meals and snacks with children?

The staff in most programs report eating meals and snacks with the children. The top reasons listed for eating with the children were that it's a requirement; to role model; for conversation and socialization; to encourage/teach good manners; and to serve family-style.

The top reasons listed for *not* eating with the children were that there isn't time; the staff eat later during their lunch break; the staff don't want to; the food is for the children only; or that their program doesn't allow it.

Who plans the menus?

Menu planning is often a shared responsibility; in 38 percent of the programs more than one person is involved. The person most often listed as the menu planner was the cook, followed by center director/assistant director, food coordinator, nutrition coordinator, and Registered Dietitian. When planning menus, the factor considered the most is meeting the CACFP meal pattern followed by nutrition. Child food preferences, cost, and variety of colors and textures all received fairly equal importance. Ease of preparation is considered the least but is still quite important.

How often are menus updated?

Most programs (61 percent) update their menus every six months. An additional 36 programs (21 percent) updated their menus within the past year. Sixteen programs updated their menus more than a year ago, and eight programs hadn't updated their menus in more than three years.

Respondents listed the following food preparation skills they would like to learn:

- Time-saving ideas, making the most of time constraints, how to maintain a faster preparation time.
- What can be done ahead of time, learning what to do in advance preparation.
- Easy ways to prepare fruits/vegetables, different ways to prepare fruit than just opening can, different ways to fix fresh veggies.
- Ways to prepare foods that will please children, picky eaters.
- More cooking from scratch.
- How to use kitchen tools.
- Making substitutions in recipes.
- How to determine correct serving sizes.

How would you rate your knowledge and skills?

Respondents felt most knowledgeable about the CACFP meal pattern requirements and food safety, followed by basic nutrition, menu planning, food purchasing, food preparation, and how to role model good nutrition. The areas with the lowest knowledge and/or skill level were recipe modification and how to provide nutrition education.

Interview summary

Thirty-five phone or face-to-face interviews completed.

Four interview forms completed as extended surveys.

Two discussion groups completed.

When menus have been updated, why were the updates made? What kinds of revisions were made?

- Seasonal updates are very common, allowing children to try new items, varying the menu with the seasons.
- Some do a food survey and get staff input; one place surveys the children.
- New ideas from CACFP, make substitutions to meet guidelines.
- Eliminate items that children don't eat or don't prefer, decrease boredom.
- Adding more homemade items and less prepackaged foods.
- Trying to make menus healthier, less fat, more fruits and vegetables, increased variety, etc.
- Trying to reduce costs.
- Trying more international foods.

What is your biggest challenge in planning menus?

As on the surveys, cost was listed as the most common challenge, followed by variety. Meeting guidelines while at the same time pleasing children was also a common theme. In terms of snacks, variety was most challenging.

Which meal do you need the most help with planning and/or preparing?

Respondents indicated they need help with planning and/or preparing all meals (breakfast, lunch, and snack). They would like help preparing breakfast in a limited time. For lunch they would like help with enhancing nutrition. For snacks they would like ideas for including protein sources, adding variety and creativity, and preparing snacks in a limited time.

What additional food preparation skills would you like to learn?

- Many mentioned skills related to time management, assembly/production, being efficient, convenient short-cuts, pre-planning and advance preparation, getting everything done at the same time, cooking two things at once.
- How to prepare proper quantities; for example, how to portion noodles for cooking (hint from interviewee was “they double in size, so fill container you need half-way before cooking), preventing over or under prepping (having too much or not having enough for meal counts).
- How to prepare what is equivalent to convenience items and save money, making healthy things from scratch that aren't too time consuming.
- Importance of standardized recipes.
- Food safety, importance of temperature logs.
- Ethnic and cultural foods.
- Dealing with allergies, special diets, religious restrictions.
- Cooking with fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Things children can do on their own.

What menu idea, food preparation technique, or creative presentation idea have you tried that you feel has enhanced your food service?

- When we serve broccoli we call it “dinosaurs eating trees.”
- Cucumber dip.
- Cutting zucchini into strips that look like french fries.
- Making more things from scratch.
- More colorful meals.
- Make your own tacos.
- Using pulled chicken.
- Adding to vegetables a touch of sugar, margarine, onion powder, vinegar/sugar, chopped peppers, and onions.
- Adding cinnamon to carrots.
- Carrying filled cups in a muffin pan.

- Incorporating cultural foods — pot stickers, gnocchi, wet burrito, lo mien noodles, chicken quesadillas dipping and presenting with chocolate.
- Stagger times of serving meals to make it less congested for cook.
- Decorated snacks (pear mice).
- Cutting fresh fruits and vegetables into shapes.
- Children serving themselves one fruit or vegetable at each meal.

How would you rate your knowledge and skills?

Interviewees felt most comfortable with their knowledge of meal pattern requirements, food purchasing, and food safety. The areas they felt least knowledgeable about were how to provide nutrition education, recipe modification, basic nutrition, and menu planning.

What are the top 2-3 areas where you would like us to focus on most in the workshop?

The top areas included providing nutrition education, recipe modification, menu planning, and food purchasing.

What would you like to learn more about?

- Information on how to train teachers to consistently model healthy food behaviors.
- Teaching parents to make healthier choices.
- Ways to share with staff, parents, and children.
- Family-focused nutrition education and how to work with children, parents, and teachers.
- Making education age-appropriate.
- More variety in menu.
- How to make recipes healthier.
- Why children need nutrients for physical development.
- Food purchasing to lower costs, budgeting ideas.
- Saving money even if it takes more time.
- Need to know what we can and cannot serve; cooks struggle with what is a nutritional meal.
- Substituting different snacks.
- Include information on food safety.
- Food allergies.

Workshop introduction

A new job title: Chef

What is the meaning of “chef”?

A chef is a professional cook. Sometimes the term is used for the one person in the kitchen who is in charge of everyone else. The word comes from the French phrase chef de cuisine, the “chief” or “head” of the kitchen.”

A new job description: Growing healthy children

RECIPE for growing healthy children

Chefs have special recipes, and these lessons are a blend of ingredients to grow healthy children who enthusiastically practice positive eating and activity behaviors, feel good about themselves, and enjoy learning about food, activity, and their growing bodies. *(See the next page for a more detailed description of what it means to be “healthy.”)*

- R** _____ what we want children to be, say, and do
- E** _____ encourages healthy behaviors
- C** _____ delicious and nutritious meals and snacks
- I** _____ children in food and fun
- P** _____ with parents
- E** _____ eating together

Today we will redefine the purpose of our food service operations from “feeding children” to following this recipe for *growing healthy children*.

Table introductions

When your turn comes as you go around your table:

- Introduce yourself as “Chef _____.”
- Tell where you are from.
- Share what is the most rewarding part of your job and which one of the letters in RECIPE you are most looking forward to learning more about.

What is a 'healthy' child?

The World Health Organization defines health as “a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.” A definition of a “healthy” child could fill volumes of books. Consider the following dimensions of health in the context of your child care program and the families you serve.

A healthy child . . .

- Is growing in a steady and predictable manner in both height and weight, according to their genetic endowment and supported by their environment and lifestyle.
- Is not easily susceptible to getting sick, and heals quickly from illnesses.
- Has access to childhood immunizations and health screenings to prevent illness and promote health.
- Values and practices good hygiene, including age-appropriate self-care, such as tooth brushing and hand washing.
- Sleeps well and gets adequate rest.
- Enjoys being physically active and has plenty of opportunities for active play.
- Enjoys eating and is provided with regular meals and snacks supplying adequate nourishment to support growth and activity.
- Lives in a safe environment and learns and practices ways to keep safe.
- Feels good about themselves.
- Experiences loving, supportive relationships and can give and receive affection.
- Appreciates and values differences in people — color and ethnicity, shape and size, youth and age, abilities and disabilities, etc.
- Exhibits curiosity in learning about the world around them and sharing what they know.
- Is able to express their thoughts and ideas and listen to others.
- Shows progress in all developmental areas — physical, cognitive, social, and emotional.

For a more comprehensive discussion of health promotion for children, refer to the *Bright Futures Guidelines for Health Supervision of Infants, Children, and Adolescents* at <http://brightfutures.aap.org/index.html>. This guide from the American Academy of Pediatrics focuses on 10 core issues: family support, child development, mental health, healthy weight, healthy nutrition, physical activity, oral health, healthy sexual development, safety and injury prevention, and community relationships and resources.

Other resources

- Children's developmental stages: www.talaris.org/timeline.htm
- American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Healthy Child Care Campaign: www.healthychildcare.org
- AAP Children's Health Topics: www.aap.org/topics.html
- AAP Healthy Children Magazine: www.aap.org/family/healthychildren/
- Key Resources for Early Education and Child Care Professionals: <http://www.healthychildcare.org/ResourcesEECCP.html>